prepare students intellectually, morally and spiritually to take their places in a rapidly changing global society and to work for the betterment of that society.'' He certainly has done that, and all of us in the Cincinnati area thank him for his vision and goodwill. We look forward to his continued leadership in our area.

RECOGNITION OF THE RETIREMENT OF PAUL SELDENRIGHT

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 15, 2000

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor a good friend of mine, Michigan State AFL–CIO COPE Director Paul Seldenright upon his retirement. Paul Seldenright has been standing up for working men and women for over 40 years, beginning in 1960 as a steelworker in Trenton. Every day during that 40 years, the working families of Michigan have had a champion in Paul. The political battles Paul has fought in Lansing and in the State of Michigan have had a direct impact on the standard of living for the working people in our State.

Paul's interest in politics led him to the position of chairman of his local PAC in 1962. In 1973, after associating himself with several successful political campaigns in Michigan, he began working for the Michigan AFL–CIO. He is a member of the A. Philip Randolph Institute as well as the Coalition of Labor Union Women and a lifetime member of the NAACP.

I want it to be known that Paul Seldenright has dedicated his life to the betterment of the working men and women of the State of Michigan. While I know Paul's retirement is well-deserved, his passion for politics and his dedication to working families will not let retirement take him from the causes he believes in and has fought for all his life.

Please join me in honoring the career of one of Michigan's working heroes as Paul completes his final days as Michigan State AFL–CIO COPE Director. Paul, we wish you all the best.

THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 15, 2000

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, in the closing days of the 106th Congress, I rise today to add perspective to the issue of the Armenian Genocide. Like many, I was deeply disappointed that the House did not consider H. Res. 596, the Armenian Genocide Resolution.

As my colleagues are well aware, the resolution was not considered because the Republic of Turkey decided to turn a sense of the House Resolution about the extensive U.S. record on the Armenian Genocide into a litmus test of its relationship with the United States. In an effort to stop the resolution, Turkey made repeated threats. In fact, many newspaper articles covering the progress of H. Res. 596 cited Turkey's numerous threats should this body move forward.

These threats were not only directed at the United States, but also at Armenia and Armenians living in Turkey. In Istanbul, Turkey, people threw rocks at the windows of the Armenian Church of Samatia, an Armenian priest was subjected to physical attacks, another priest was arrested for referencing the Armenian Genocide, True Path Party leader Tansu Ciller called for the deportation of 30,000 Armenians, military activities increased along the border, and this shocking list goes on.

I regret that the Republic of Turkey opted to use coercion to make its case. However, it is even more regrettable that the United States succumbed to such tactics. I believe that we must remain vigilant in the fact of threats and those who continue to deny the Armenian Genocide.

While the resolution was aborted in Congress, internationally the pace of Genocide affirmation continued. During November alone, despite Turkish threats, the European Parliament, along with France and Italy, all adopted resolutions affirming the Armenian Genocide. In addition, Pope John Paul II recognized the Armenian Genocide. Today I am submitting copies of these documents for the record.

Many experts have called for a dialogue between Turkey and Armenia on this subject. In fact, on October 3rd, the State Department offered to broker a dialogue between these two countries. While Armenia has repeatedly agreed, Turkey has refused. During his address at the Assembly of Turkish-American Associations in Washington, DC last month, Anthony Blinken, U.S. National Security Council European Director, indicated that Turkey had the responsibility to take the first step to start a dialogue with Armenia. Blinken said ''as a small, landlocked country suffering from economic problems, Armenia sees Turkey as offering a fist, not a hand.''

I agree with Mr. Blinken on this point. From Armenia's perspective, Turkey's ongoing hostile actions and continued violations of international human rights laws and treaties represent a significant security threat. Turkey's defense spending is the highest of any NATO country as a percentage of its Gross National Product (GNP) and over the next 25 years Turkey plans to spend $150 billion modernizing its armed forces—against whom is unclear. Armenia simply does not have the resources to defend its own borders, especially given Turkey's military superiority and defense spending. Turkey's blockade, refusal to establish normal relations, military superiority, refusal to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide, and complete solidarity with Azerbaijan's demands regarding the Nagorno Karabagh conflict has only served to reinforce Armenia's view and has forced Armenia to rely on third parties to buttress its security capacity. As my colleagues know, Armenians faced genocide at the beginning of the 20th Century and the Armenians of Nagorno Karabagh suffered another attack during the end of the 20th Century. It is incumbent on us to ensure that Armenians and others around the world are not subjected to genocide in the 21st Century.

I would like to point out to my colleagues that since gaining its independence Armenia has consistently reached out and sought to normalize relations with Turkey only to be rebuffed at every step. Last year, when Turkey suffered a devastating earthquake, Armenia was one of the first countries to offer assistance. Armenia, having endured a major earthquake years before, has developed an expertise in earthquake response and recovery. Despite Armenia's offer, Turkey initially rejected assistance. In fact, it was reported that Turkey's Minister of Health, Osman Durmus, rejected offers of blood from Armenia because he didn't want Turkish blood mixed with theirs. More recently, Armenia offered earthquake assistance to Azerbaijan. To date, Azerbaijan has not accepted Armenia's offer. Finally, Armenia's President, Robert Kocharian has proposed the creation of a regional security system that will facilitate long-term peace and regional cooperation. President Kocharian stated, ''the creation of such a system will allow the states of the region to cast away the current concerns and to overcome the atmosphere of distrust. It will allow [the settlement of] the current conflicts, to avoid the emergence of new dividing lines, to establish long-term peace, and to think about prospects of development and [a] prosperous future.'' Turkey did not take President Kocharian up on his offer.

Time and time again, Armenia has shown its willingness to normalize relations with its neighbors. However, Armenia's offers have fallen on deaf ears. In my view, if Congress is unwilling to recognize and affirm the U.S. record in response to the Armenian Genocide, why would Turkey feel any obligation to enter into a dialogue with its weaker neighbor Armenia when it has successfully silenced the United States? It is my hope that we can continue to work on these important human rights issues during the 107th Congress and create an atmosphere in the Caucasus region whereby the security of all countries is not at issue and people can exchange views without the fear of retribution.

ITALIAN RESOLUTION

The Italian Chamber of Deputies has observed that on November 15, 2000 the European Parliament approved by a large majority a proposal deriving from the Periodic Review on the progress made by Turkey towards admission to the European Community, a review completed by the European Commission in 1999. The Turkish government has been encouraged to intensify its efforts towards democratization, especially in the fields of criminal law reform, independence of the judiciary, freedom of expression, and the rights of minorities.

The Italian Chamber of Deputies has also observed that the recent resolution deals with questions concerning the Armenian people in three paragraphs of particular significance: ''we urge recognition of the genocide inflicted upon the Armenian minority [within the Ottoman Empire] committed before the creation of the modern Republic of Turkey (paragraph 10); improvement of relations with Turkey's neighbors in the Caucasus, as proposed by the Turkish government itself (paragraph 20;'' and, in support of the suggestion put forward in paragraph 21 by the Hon. D. Cohn-Bendit, President of the Bipartisan Parliamentary Commission on UE-Turkish relations, ''invites the Turkish government to open negotiations with the Republic of Armenia, restore diplomatic relations and trade between the two countries, placing an end to the blockade currently in place.''

The Chamber of Deputies therefore urges the Italian Government, in concordance with the proposals described above, to pursue energetically the easing of all tensions between peoples and minorities in that area, [i.e. the Caucasus], in order to create, with due observance of the territorial integrity of the